

TO SOULS IN AGONY

NO. 1216

A SERMON
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell got hold upon me.
I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the Lord;
O Lord, I beseech You, deliver my soul . . . You have delivered
my soul from death, my eyes from tears,
and my feet from falling.”
Psalm 116:3, 4, 8.*

THE great trouble which is here described very probably happened to David long after he had been a believer. He had been living the life of faith, perhaps, for years, in a calm, happy, and quiet manner. But by-and-by, he met with outward tribulation and not a little of inward conflict. At some time or other, it generally happens to a believer, between the setting out at the wicket gate and the crossing of the last river, that he endures a great fight of afflictions. My observation leads me to notice that those who begin with rough times, frequently have a smooth path afterwards, while others, whose first experience was very sunny and peaceful, meet with fierce conflicts farther on. Those who have enjoyed a long, calm, and comparatively easy life, may meet their stormiest hours at the close of their days, for some of the best of God's children, to use an old Puritan's expression, “Are put to bed in the dark.” Their sun sets in clouds, but doubtless, it rises again in the full splendor of the eternal morning! Somewhere or other, brethren, you will learn to acknowledge that—

*“The path of sorrow, and that path, alone,
Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown.”*

The saints above who sing the new song are, at least many of them, described by the words, “These are they which came out of great tribulation.” That is the general way to heaven and perhaps few travelers reach paradise by any other road.

Let believers, therefore, not count upon immunity from trouble, but let them reckon upon sufficient grace for it. Let them believe that God's choicest letters of love are sent to us in black-edged envelopes. We are frightened at the envelope, but inside, if we know how to break the seal, we shall find riches for our souls. Great trials are the clouds out of which God gives great mercies. Very frequently, when the Lord has an extraordinary mercy to send to us, He employs His rough and grizzled horses to drag it to the door. The smooth rivers of ease are usually navigated by little vessels filled with common commodities, but a huge galleon, loaded with treasure, traverses the deep seas.

Let the children of God learn, from this passage in David's experience, that their best resort in trouble is *prayer*. When the sorrows of death compass you, pray! When the pains of hell get hold upon you, pray! When you find trouble and sorrow, pray! Everything else which prudence and wisdom suggest is to be done in a time of difficulty, but none of these things are to be relied upon by themselves. “Salvation is of the Lord,” whether it is salvation from troubles or from sins. You do right to provide the horse for the day of battle, but still, safety is of the Lord. Use the means, but never supplant faith by the *use* of means. When you have done all, trust in God as though you had done nothing, for, “Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman watches but in vain.” In all things pray! And be well assured that, if at this moment you are in the same plight as David was, prayer will bring you out of it. Prayer is the catholic, the universal cure! It subdues every disease. In spiritual conflicts, it has a thousand uses. You may say of it, “By this, will I break through a troop; by this, will I leap over a wall; by this, will I put on shield and buckler and by this, will I smite the foe.” Prayer can unlock the treasures of God and shut the gates of hell! Prayer can quench the violence of flames and stop the lions' mouths. Prayer can overcome

heaven and bend omnipotence to its will. Only pray, brethren, believingly and in the name of the Well-Beloved, and answers of peace must be given to you.

I intend, this evening, to use the text with another view. I mean to accommodate it, as I think lawfully, and to use it as a description of the condition of an awakened sinner. To sinners under conviction, I would address myself, for I know there are such in the congregation. I was glad to hear their cries the other night and I hope, with that, the Lord means to bless them and bring them into liberty. We shall speak, first, of *this poor soul's condition*. Then, of *his course of action*; and then, of *the deliverance he obtained*.

I. First, here is THE WRETCHED CONDITION into which many a poor awakened soul has been brought.

But let me, before I proceed further, say, that if any of you are believers in Christ and have not felt all that I speak of, you are not to condemn yourselves because of it. There are many maladies in the world. If I am describing a sickness and the way in which the physician cures it, you must not say, "I am surely wrong, for I never felt that phase of the disease." That does not matter. No man suffers all maladies. If you are resting only upon Jesus, do not disturb yourself—that which I am about to utter is not meant for your disturbance, but for other people's comfort.

From our text, I remark that many a troubled conscience *feels the sorrows of death*. That is to say he is the subject of griefs similar to those which beset men on their dying beds. I have passed through this state, myself, and I shall, therefore, describe it the more feelingly. What are the sorrows of death?

One of the sorrows of a sinner's death is *the retrospect*. The dying sinner looks back and sees nothing in his life that yields him comfort. He could wish that the day had been darkness in which it was said that a child was born into the world, for he feels that his existence has been a blank and worse than that, an insult to God and the cause of misery to himself. He cannot see a bright or hopeful spot in his whole history. So, too, the man truly awakened weeps over a dreadful past and laments because all is evil and the very things he once gloried in are tarnished. He sees that to have been sin, which before he thought to have been righteousness! And he bemoans himself, saying within his heart, "Would God I had never been born." Many an awakened man has said, as John Bunyan did, that he wished he had been a frog or a toad, or a venomous serpent sooner than have been a man to have lived as he had lived. Are you feeling, dear friend, or have you ever felt that sorrow of death? Some of us have felt it keenly.

Another sorrow of death is grief over *the present*. The man lies tossing to and fro upon his deathbed and all his glory and beauty are gone. The bloom of health has departed from him. He is a very different man from what he was in the days of his agility and vigor—and he knows it. So is it with the sinner—he feels the pining sickness of sin consuming him as the moth consumes a garment. His moisture is turned into the drought of summer. His glory is as a faded flower and the excellence of his flesh, in which he boasted and said that he was no worse than others and perhaps, was even better, is now passed away. The Spirit, when He blows upon man, finding all flesh to be grass, withers it all up—and so He destroys the glory of man's estate and makes his excellency decay till the man is sick to death of himself. The dying man also sees all his strength departing. Perhaps he thinks, like Samson, to shake himself as at other times, but he is mistaken. The limbs that bore him to his bed fall under him and the hand with which he labored drops palsied by his side. The very eyelids scarcely can drop to form a curtain from the light, or lift themselves to admit the blessed beams of the sun. The golden bowl is breaking and the silver cord is being snapped. It is just so with an awakened sinner. He feels death in his soul. He used to be able, as he thought, to do anything! His notion was that he could repent and believe, amend and reform and save himself whenever he liked. But now, the cold chill of death has come upon all his powers and he hears Christ, in mercy, saying, "Without Me you can do nothing. No man can come to Me unless the Father, which has sent Me, draw him." A man experiences a dreadful paralysis in his soul when he is really and thoroughly awakened. The Spirit of God is making sure work of his conversion! He sees his beauty faded and his strength departed and thus, the sorrows of death get hold upon him.

Another present sorrow of death is the discovery that friends are no longer of any service. The dying man must leave wife and children. They would gladly accompany him, but they cannot. That dear wife would be willing to dare death, itself, if she might still continue the companion of the man whom she

has loved, but it must not be. The fondest affection cannot help, now. The awakened sinner discovers precisely the same thing with regard to spiritual help. He would have looked to a priest, but he dares not. He would have looked to his minister, but he knows that if he did, he would be disappointed. He finds emptiness written upon every creature, so far as his soul's necessities are concerned. His sore is too terrible for any man to find a plaster, his wound too deep for any human hand to close it up. The sorrows of death, in this respect, compass him.

Perhaps the worst sorrow about the death of an ungodly man is *the prospect*. The past is black, but blacker, still, the future. The present is gloomy, but oh, the darkness, which may be *felt*, which environs the hereafter! The dying man shudders at the awful future and so does the awakened sinner. He dares not go forward! He is afraid and a dreadful sound is in his ears. I, myself, before I obtained mercy, was afraid lest every tuft of grass I trod on should open beneath my feet and swallow me up. So did sin press upon me, that I should not have been astonished if I had met, in my daily walks, an angel, as Balaam did, with a drawn sword! And if he had said to me, "You are doomed forever for your sin," I could only have been dumb before him, or confessed the justice of the sentence. Thus does many a sinner feel the sorrows of death compass him. They are all around him—those sorrows of the past, the present, and the future.

The description becomes yet more graphic in the next sentence. *Awakened sinners sometimes feel what they describe as the pains of hell*. Not that any living man does endure the pains of hell to the extent which they are suffered in hell, but still a dreadful foretaste of those pains may be experienced, and sometimes is experienced, by an awakened conscience. What are these pains of hell?

First, there is the pain of *remorse*. Before the soul believes in Christ, it has no repentance, but it suffers remorse—a sorrow for sin because of its penalty! It is a dreadful horror of having lived such a life because it sees that it must be punished for that life, and that God, the infinitely just, must take vengeance upon its transgressions. Remorse! Is not its tooth as sharp as that of the undying worm? Is not its burning as the fires of Tophet? When we felt it, we cried, "My soul chooses strangling rather than life!" If God, in mercy, did not stay the soul with some little wavering hope, even before it comes to faith in Jesus, surely the spirit of man would utterly fail under a remorseful sense of sin!

One of the pains of hell is a sense of *condemnation*. The lost souls are called the "Damned"—in other words, *the condemned*. Assuredly, before we believed in Jesus, some of us felt that we were condemned. "Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." I remember how that curse howled through my soul like the tempest shrieking among the shrouds of a sinking ship. "Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them"—I knew that I had not continued in all things required by the law—and I knew that I was cursed! And then came this other text. It was the gospel side of the same terrible blast—"He that believes not is condemned already"—*condemned already*—"because he has not believed on the Son of God." When two such winds, as those two texts, meet each other, it is enough to sweep the poor frail tenement of manhood to a ruin like that which overthrew the house in which the sons of Job were met to feast! Oh, brethren, it is no little thing—let those who know it assure you—to have felt the pains of hell!

Perhaps one of the acutest pangs of an awakened conscience is a sense of *hopelessness*, a terrible despair, unalleviated by any prospect of improvement in the future. We were driven to that, too, some of us. All hope of our being saved was lost. There was, sometimes, a little twinkling ray of light which seemed to say, "Jesus came to seek and to save sinners." But we could not even see that lone star at all times, for we thought that He did not come to seek and to save such sinners as *we* were and moreover, since we had rejected Him before, we feared that His mercy was clean gone forever! How despairingly was I known to harp upon that thought! I now wish I had not done so, but I know that some others do it and I would speak to their experience. May God deliver their frail boats from the whirlpools of despair, that awful whirlpool which has sucked down so many!

There is another pang of hell which the awakened feel and that is *a crushing sense of misery*. Though not in hell yet—and blessed be God you will not be—yet some of you feel almost as wretched as if you were there, for remorse, intensified by a sense of condemnation and lashed by despair, creates a dreadful storm within your soul, till your heart cries out—

*“At noise of Your dread waterspout
 Deep unto deep does call!
 Your breaking waves go over me,
 Yes, and Your billows all.
 I am cast out from Your sight:
 I seek You, but I cannot find You:
 I cry after You, but You hear me not.”*

Then is the soul smitten, indeed. Read the books of Job and Jeremiah and you will see what broken hearts can suffer. Those books were not written for people in olden times only, but they declare the present experience of many a seeker after Christ—and thus they oftentimes render comfort to poor souls when no other portion of God’s Word seems to have a single syllable to speak to them.

Thus I have taken two great sentences of the text—“The sorrows of death compassed me” and “The pains of hell got hold upon me.” But the case was worse than this, for *the poor soul felt no alleviation* and knew of no escape. These things were, by themselves, unsoftened. They were left in all their terror—the gall was unmixed, the vinegar undiluted. Notice the language. “The sorrows of death *compassed me*.” It is a very strong word. When hunters seek their prey, they form a circle around the poor animal that is to be destroyed. The poor panting creature looks to the right, but a man with a spear is there. He looks to the left and there are the dogs. Before and behind him are more spearmen, more hounds, more hunters—there is no way of escape. So does an awakened soul discern no rescue, no loophole by which it may be delivered.

The text says, “The pangs of hell *got hold upon me*.” “Got hold.” As if the jaws of the lion had really gripped the lamb, or the paws of the bear were hugging the poor defenseless sheep. “Got hold upon me.” As though God’s terrible sergeant from the court of justice had laid his hand upon his shoulder and said, “I arrest you in the name of God to lie in hell’s prison and perish forever.” Many a soul has felt that and felt, also, that it could not get away from the terrible grip. Some who know nothing of contrition and heartbreak inquire, “Why don’t they get out of such bondage?” Ah, but if you were in that condition, such a question would grieve, if not exasperate you! I have known persons put a great many questions to troubled hearts which they, themselves, could not answer if they were in their state. Do you ask a man who has had both his legs broken, and lies across the rails of the railway—why do you not walk home? Why does he not walk home? Say, rather—why do you ask such a foolish question? When a poor soul is broken to pieces and despairing, tell him what Christ did for him and say very little about what he ought to do! You will never comfort the desponding man by telling him his duty. Speak, rather, of Jesus’ love! Poor souls, they are so disturbed and tossed about that they can do nothing! Tell them what Jesus has done! That is the way to bring light to their souls.

Once more, the psalmist felt *no comfort from any exertion that he made*. That takes in the last sentence of the text’s description. “I found trouble and sorrow,” so that he looked for something, but the only result of his search was that he found trouble and sorrow. Do you remember, beloved believer, in the days when you were under bondage on account of sin—how you bound yourself apprentice to Moses to work out your own salvation by your own goodness? What did you get? Surely you found trouble in the work and sorrow as its wages! You were like a horse at a mill—the whip was used very freely upon you, but it brought you nothing except a sense of failure—a conviction that all you had done was rather a provocation of God by setting up an antichrist of your own righteousness. There was no help towards atonement for your sin. You found trouble and sorrow. Perhaps you went to Mr. Legality, and he and his son, Mr. Morality, did what they could for you. But if you were really awakened, all that you got from them was trouble and sorrow. That was the whole result of it. It is just possible that you went over the road to the ceremonial shop—attended one of the ritualistic jogs-houses and went through the performances there. And then you were told that a priest could absolve you and an outward form and ceremony could quiet your mind. Ah, if you were a living soul you found only trouble and sorrow in all that foolery! And now you have come to look upon it with intense contempt—as the most intolerable imposture of any age since man began to seek out many inventions! Vain is it to harp to a hungry belly, or dance to a broken limb! And equally a mockery are all the posturing and lies of Romanism to those whose hearts bleed for sin—

*“None but Jesus, none but Jesus,
Can do helpless sinners good.”*

If they look elsewhere, they will find trouble and sorrow, and nothing more.

Assuredly, this a pretty pass to be brought to. What is to be done? What is to be done? Sinner, there is *nothing* to be done! At least, nothing which *you* can do. You are shut up to be saved by Jesus, or to be lost! I liked the remark of a good brother from this platform the other day, when he said that gospel ministers were fishers and that we were to fish with nets. It was all a mistake that we were to catch people with bait—that was angling—and there was nothing about angling in Christ’s commission. We are to fish with nets. Now, what is a net for? The net is to shut the fish up. It goes under them, around them, everywhere—and shuts them up so that they cannot get out. That is exactly what God does with poor sinners whom He means to save! He shuts them right up. He puts the net round them and they cannot get out. Only when the net quite encloses his fish can the gospel fisherman get them out of the sea of sin and lift them into the boat where Jesus sits! We must get the net right round them—shut them up by the law that they may be brought to Christ.

Every avenue of escape is closed against you forever, sinner, except one—and that is Christ, who says, “I am the door.” There is no other door, neither upwards nor downwards, to the right nor to the left, before nor behind! You are ruined and destroyed, O sinner, and you must perish if left to yourself! There is none in earth, or heaven, that can help you, save one; and O, if the Lord will lead you to look to Him, what a blessed thing it will be!

II. That brings us to the second part of our discourse, which is to speak about the awakened sinner’s **COURSE OF ACTION.** “*Then called I upon the name of the Lord.*”

What did he do? First, *he called*—called upon God’s name, invoked Him, spoke to Him, lifted up his heart, and lifted up his voice—called as a man might do who is lost in a fog and calls to a neighbor, hoping to hear a voice that will guide him. Or as one who is far away in the bush of Australia and gives a call in the hope that some human voice may respond to it. This call is often described as a cry—a natural, simple, authentic, unpleasant, but most effectual style of expressing our distress. Oh, sinner, if God has really been at work with you and you are where I have been describing, you will call to God *now*! Your heart will cry to God at once! Tears will speak for you, sighs will speak for you. Your heart, in its *silence*, will speak unto God and call upon His name!

Now, notice he says, “Then called I upon the name of the *Lord*.” There will be no more calling upon ministers, or calling upon priests, or calling upon yourself, but “Then called I upon the name of the *Lord*.” The sinner had forgotten the Lord till then, and now the Lord came to his remembrance. “When he came to himself he said, How many hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare?” Thus his father came to the prodigal’s remembrance. When we get among the swine and would gladly fill our bellies with their husks, but cannot, *then*, we begin to pray to God whom we have forgotten. “Then called I upon the name of the Lord.” Now, what better could he do, for who could help him if the sorrows of death compassed him? Who but He who overthrew death and vanquished the grave? Who can help us, when the pains of hell get hold upon us, but He who has passed through the pains that were due us for the death penalty—and who has cast both death and hell into the lake of fire? Who can help the hopeless one so well as the Conqueror of death and hell? Who can sympathize like the Lord? The Lord Jesus, Himself, has known the sorrows of death and therefore, He is touched with compassion for the sons of men. Is He not the Son of Man, Himself, tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin? Poor sinner, I tried to shut you up, but now, I set before you an open door! Call upon the name of Him who knows your condition, is able to meet it, and to deliver you!

When did he call? That is the important point in this text. “Then called I upon the name of the Lord.” *Then*. Was that the first time in his life? Perhaps it was. Begin at once, O sinner! Notice, he says, “The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell got hold upon me. I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the Lord.” When his condition was at its very worst, then he called upon God. Why did he not stop till he became better? He knew that delays are dangerous. “Then called I.” Had he tarried till he was better, he would never have called at all, but he called then and though it was the first time, he was not ashamed to break the ice, or if he *was* ashamed, he did it anyway and succeed-

ed! Suppose that you never, till this night, did ever look to your heavenly Father, and now it is the worst state of life with you that you were ever in. What then? Even now is the time for prayer! Now you need your God and now you may have your God! “*Then called I.*” You see, he did not call upon God till God sent death and hell after him. He was a wandering sheep and so set on going astray that he would not come back till the two fiercest dogs that the Great Shepherd keeps had come after him! And then he came back with a passion!

I half wish that God would send death and hell after some of you who never will come—that they might worry you and tear you—and make you return to the Great Shepherd. “*Then called I.*” That is to say, when I could call on no one else; no sinner ever calls upon God till he finds that he has nowhere else to go! And yet the Lord receives these good-for-nothings! Although we only come because we have nowhere else to go, yet He will receive us! Into the port of sovereign grace no vessel ever runs except through stress of weather—when the sea is rough and the wind furious. When the tempest is on and the ship must go down or else—then Lord Will-Be-Will, who has held the helm before and said, “I will never enter that harbor”—is suddenly subdued and cries, “Oh for a gust of heavenly wind to blow us between the two red lights, right into the safe waters where we may ride at peace.” I pray God to send a tempest after all of you Jonahs that you may be brought to the right place, after all, and landed safely on the shore of sovereign mercy. “*Then called I upon the name of the Lord.*”

And now, for his prayer. Here it is—“O Lord, I beseech You, deliver my soul.” A *very natural prayer*, was it not? He just said what he meant, and meant what he said, and that is the way to pray! It is a *very short prayer*. Many a prayer is too long by at least 20 lines. It is smothered under a bed full of words. There are times when a Christian can pray from hour to hour—but it is a great mistake when brethren measure their supplications by the clock. The great matter is not how long you pray, but how *earnestly* you pray. Consider the life of the prayer rather than the length of the prayer. If your prayer reaches to heaven, it is long enough! What longer can it need to be? If it does not reach the Lord, though it occupied you for a week, it would not be long enough to be of use.

It was a *humble prayer*—“O Lord, I beseech You.” It is the language of one who is bowed in the dust. It was an *intense prayer*—“O Lord, I beseech You, deliver my soul.” But I want you most of all to notice that it was a *scriptural prayer*. There are three great little prayers in Scripture—“O Lord, I beseech You, deliver my soul.” “God, be merciful to me a sinner.” And, “Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.” These are all contained in the Lord’s prayer. “O Lord, I beseech You, deliver my soul,” is, “Deliver us from evil.” “God be merciful to me a sinner”—what is that, but, “Forgive us our trespasses”? And what is the prayer, “Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom,” but that grand petition, “Your kingdom come”? How wonderfully comprehensive is that prayer which our Lord Jesus has given us for a model! All prayers may be condensed into it, or distilled from it.

Let no person here say, “I am in the distress which you have described, but I cannot pray.” Why not? “I have no words.” You need no words—wordless prayers are frequently the best. “But I can only groan.” Groan away, brother! “But I feel as if I could only sigh.” Sigh, then! “My heart aches, but I do not know how to express myself.” Do not express yourself—let your heart ache on—only let it ache up to God! Turn all your desires towards Him and let this be the intense pleading of your spirit—“O Lord, I beseech You, deliver my soul.” You know we have a law that people must not beg in the streets. There is a man I know on a certain road who does not beg and yet begs. The police would not let him beg and therefore, he never begs at all—not he! It would be a slander to say of him that he begs! But he wears a pair of shoes through which you can see his toes and the side of his heel. You can spy his knees through his trousers. His cheeks are all sunken and his whole appearance is that of a consumptive man who must soon die. He has been consuming now for many years and dying daily most comfortably! I believe that if I were to say to him, “Are you a beggar?” he would reply, “Beggar? No, sir, certainly not! I never beg.” Yet he is one of the most successful of beggars! His *looks* beg! His *rags* beg! His *flesh* begs! His weariness begs! His general air of sickness begs! Everything about him begs! He begs all over! That is the way to PRAY! Pour out your heart before the Lord, with or without words, as you find most easy—but let your inmost heart be really full of desire! Be resolved about obtaining the blessing! Do as one did the other night, who said within himself, “I am a lost soul, but I will never rise from the side of this bed

till I find the Savior. I am determined to get forgiveness or die on my knees.” He cried and groaned and won the day! We should not have liked to have heard his pitiful cries, for there was no beauty or elegance in his language and no music in his groans—but the Lord heard him and saved his soul!

“O Lord, I beseech You, deliver my soul,” is a prayer most congruous to the situation and in every way *suitable* to it! Oh, that all prayers were as suitable as this! This, then, is the wisdom of every poor distressed soul in its time of trouble. It must, by a simple faith in Jesus, breathe out its desire at the cross and say, “Jesus, Savior, save me now, and deliver my soul.”

III. Our third point is DELIVERANCE and for this I refer you to the 8th verse. This poor, pleading, doubting, trembling petitioner received *what he asked for*. He said, “O Lord, I beseech You, deliver my soul,” and before long he sang, “You have delivered my soul.” As the echo answers to the voice, so the Lord replied to his request. If you are asking for salvation with all your heart—with your eye on Christ’s cross—you shall have it! If you cast yourself before Jesus and say to Him, “If I perish, I will perish at Your pierced feet,” you shall not perish! If you sincerely cry for forgiveness, as the publican did, you shall go down to your house justified!

Note, next, that while he had what he asked for, *it came from Him of whom he asked it*—“You have delivered my soul from death.” We delight to ascribe salvation wholly to our Triune God! Some brethren are a little cloudy in their talk about man’s salvation. But when you get to the inner experience of all true believers, they will always tell you that they did *not* save themselves and they agree that it was not by their own will or merit that they were saved, but by the sovereign grace of God, alone. The unrighteous may gain deliverance from themselves, or their fellow men, but those whom the Holy Spirit convicts of sin must be delivered by the Lord Himself—nothing short of a divine salvation will do for them. “You have delivered my soul from death.” Mine was a case in which none could help me but Yourself, my God. My sorrows demanded omnipotent cordials—only the blood of Jesus and the balm of the Holy Spirit could comfort me!

Note, again, that this blessing came consciously to him. “You *have* delivered my soul from death.” He does not say, “I *hope* You have” but, “You have.” “I know it, I am sure of it, I rejoice in it.” And it is not, “I have shared the blessing in common with a great many and I hope that I have an interest in it.” No, but, “You have delivered my soul from death. If there is not another saved man in the world, I am one.” The faith which looks, alone, to Jesus is an appropriating grace and enables the soul to say, “He loved me and gave Himself for me.” As a dear young friend said to me last Monday night, when I was speaking to her about her soul, “I came to see, sir, that Christ loved me as much as though there was not another man or woman in the world, and laid His life down in my place, as much as if there was not another sinner that needed His blood to be shed. When I got Christ all to myself, then, I rejoiced in Him and now,” she said, “I want everybody else to have Him.” It is just so. We must get Him, ourselves, with a holy greediness that fences Him about all for ourselves, and then, we shall cultivate a large-hearted love for souls and long that every other person may know the same precious Christ. So the psalmist, you see, got what he asked for—it came from Him of whom he asked it—and it came consciously *to him*.

But I want you to notice one other thing. *He gained a great deal more than he asked for*. He prayed, “O Lord, I beseech You, deliver my soul,” and God delivered his soul from death, his eyes from tears and his feet from falling. He asked for one thing, and he obtained it—and two other things besides—for it is our heavenly Father’s way to do exceedingly abundantly above what we ask or even think. Blessed be His name!

He gained *deliverance from death*, for souls can die though they cannot cease to exist. They die when separated from God, as Adam’s soul died in the day when he ate of the forbidden fruit—and as all souls are dead, until by union to God, they are quickened into spiritual life. Through the grace of God, David was delivered from the spiritual death which reigns within and the eternal death to which it leads.

His eyes were also cleared from tears. Who is not free from sorrow when he is free from the fear of the death penalty? Forgiveness has joy at its heel wherever it comes!

And then, having gained salvation and joy, the Lord gave him *stability*. Those feet that were so apt to slide were set fast and the fear of future apostasy was removed by the gracious securities which God

gave to him that He would never leave him. Thus, he had a blessing for his soul, his eyes, and his feet—salvation, joy, and stability!

The last word to be said is this—*these same blessings can be had by others*. If I address any who are now passing through the terrible experience of David, or anything like it—or if I address any who are *not* passing through any such experience, but nevertheless, desire life everlasting—I would say to them, “Remember, the reason David was heard did not lie in his *prayer*, or in *himself*, but it lay in God!” Read the verse which follows my first text—the 5th verse, “Gracious is the Lord and righteous; yes, our God is merciful.” *That* is why the Lord heard David’s prayer—because He is gracious and He loves to show divine grace to sinners! It was also because He is righteous and therefore, keeps His promises. He has made a promise that He will hear prayer and He has said, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.” And, therefore, in mercy and righteousness, He will hear us.

Remember, too, that if your distresses are like David’s, *you may use the same prayer*, because you have the same promises. God’s promises are not used up and spent so that they will not work for you. If a good meal is provided for half-a-dozen people and they eat it all up, and six more come afterwards, why, they must go without! But with God’s promises, it is not so! They are fed upon by myriads and yet they remain the same! Ten thousand souls have fed upon a precious Christ and received what they needed from Him, and yet 10,000 more may come—

*“Dear dying Lamb, Your precious blood
Shall never lose its power
Till all the ransomed church of God
Is saved to sin no more.”*

Let us remember, then, that we have the same promises and the same God. Let the same prayer be offered by each unconverted one here—“O Lord, I beseech You, deliver my soul.” God’s answer to that is, “Believe on My Son, Jesus Christ. Trust Him wholly and your soul is delivered.”—

*“All your sins were laid upon Him,
Jesus bore them on the tree.
God who knew them laid them on Him,
And believing, you are free!”*

Trust Him and you are delivered, for thus says the Lord, “I will deliver his soul from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom.” Turn your eyes to what Jesus Christ has done! Rest in His finished sacrifice and go your way rejoicing! May God the Eternal Spirit lead each of you poor sinners to that! And I would entreat you, when He does so, to come and let us know it. Do as the psalmist tells you by his example. Say, “What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord, now, in the presence of all His people.” Do not hide His love! Confess it to His glory, for the comfort of His people, for the encouragement of His minister and for the strengthening of His church! The Lord be with you, brethren, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 116.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—30, 138.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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